

The federal government offers a wide range of services and support for our nation's agriculture communities. Below are some links to help you access these resources.

[Farming](#) - [Forestry](#) - [Conservation](#) - [Agribusiness](#) - [Rural Development](#) - [Hunting & Fishing](#)

Farming Resource Center

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Farm Services Agency](#) is dedicated to achieving an economically and environmentally sound future for American agriculture. The agency has a number of resources to help farmers in Southwest Georgia.

Farm Loan Programs

Makes direct and guaranteed Farm Ownership (FO) and Operating Loans (OL) to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, the Farm Credit System institution, or other lenders.

Price Support Division

Administers a host of Farm Service Agency programs to assist farmers and ranchers in managing their businesses.

Peanut Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments Cotton and Rice Price Support Programs

Commodity Operation

Important information about USDA's support for farmers throughout Southwest Georgia.

[Environmental and Cultural Resource Compliance](#)

Information regarding how FSA is ensuring that the implementation of its programs meet all applicable environmental and cultural resource review requirements.

[Commodity Credit Corporation](#)

Here you will find information on everything related to U.S. and foreign financial institutions, current commodity loans interest rates and export credit guarantee programs.

[Disaster Assistance](#)

Find information on emergency loans for assistance with natural disaster losses resulting from drought, flood, fire, freeze, tornadoes, pest infestation, and other calamities.

[Tobacco Transition Payment Program](#)

Also called the "tobacco buy-out," helps tobacco quota holders and producers transition to the free market.

[Crop and Livestock Insurance](#)

Crop and livestock insurance information that allows customers to quickly calculate premiums, locate agents, and download files on demand.

Additionally, the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service offers the **[National Animal Identification System](#)**

(NAIS) to protect the health of U.S. livestock and poultry by quickly and effectively tracing an animal disease to its source.

Created in 1953 by the Georgia Legislature to help develop opportunities for Georgia farmers, the **[Georgia Development Authority](#)** offers an insured farm loan program.

Additional Links:

[United States Department of Agriculture](#)

[Georgia Department of Agriculture](#)

[National Farm Bureau](#)

[Georgia Farm Bureau](#)

[The University of Georgia College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences](#)

Commodity Organization Links:

[Georgia Peanut Commission](#)
[National Cotton Council](#)
[Georgia Cotton Commission](#)
[National Pork Producers](#)
[Georgia Pork Producers](#)
[U.S. Poultry and Egg Association](#)
[American Soybean Association](#)
[National Cattleman's Beef Association](#)
[Georgia Pecan Commission](#)
[Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association](#)

Additional Documents:

[H-2A Rule Amendment Fact Sheet](#) (2010)

[Settlement Fact Sheet](#) *In re Black Farmers Discrimination Litig.* (February 18, 2010)

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Forestry Resource Center

The USDA has put together a helpful document, the [Forest Landowners' Guide to the Federal Income Tax](#). Access it and other helpful publications at the [U.S. Forest Service's Publications Page](#).

The [U.S. Forest Service](#) has a number of programs available that are of interest to Southwest Georgia Foresters.

[Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) assists private landowners, helping them to address natural resource problems which threaten environmental quality.

[Wetlands Reserve Program](#)

A voluntary program which offers financial support to landowners' wetlands restoration and protection projects.

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

Provides cost-share assistance to private landowners to help them enhance wildlife habitat areas on their lands.

Additionally, through the **Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program**, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offers technical and financial assistance to private landowners to voluntarily restore wetlands and other fish and wildlife habitats on their land.

The Georgia Forestry Commission offers a **Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) Cost Share Program** to help landowners implement various silvicultural practices that will either prevent, or minimize, impacts of future southern pine beetle infestations or to restore areas already impacted by these destructive insects.

Additional Links:

[Georgia Department of Agriculture](#)

[USDA Forest Service](#)

[Georgia Forestry Commission](#)

[Southeastern Society of American Foresters](#)

[Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources](#) (University of Georgia)

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Conservation Resource Center

The USDA's **Farm Services Agency** has a number of conservation programs that are beneficial to Southwest Georgia farmers and landowners:

Conservation Reserve Program

A voluntary program for agricultural landowners that allows them to receive annual rental

payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

A voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water.

Emergency Conservation Program

Provides emergency funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought.

Additional Federal Government Resources are available through the USDA's **Natural Resources Conservation Service**

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Conservation of Private Grazing Land Initiative

Ensures that technical, educational, and related assistance is provided to those who own private grazing lands. It is not a cost share program.

Conservation Security Program

A voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working lands.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

A voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

Provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses.

Grassland Reserve Program

A voluntary conservation program that emphasizes support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grassland under threat of conversion to other uses.

Resource Conservation & Development Program

To accelerate the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, improve the general level of economic activity, and to enhance the environment and standard of living in

designated areas.

Wetlands Reserve Program

A voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

A voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land.

Georgia Soil and Water Commission also has conservation programs for Georgia farmers and landowners:

Urban Lands Program

To improve and protect Georgia's urban soil and water resources through the use of best management practices as called for in the soil and water conservation districts law and delivered through soil and water conservation districts.

Ag Lands Program

To conserve and enhance Georgia's agricultural soil and water resources on private lands through the use of best management practices funded yearly by the Federal Farm bill and delivered through soil and water conservation districts.

Conservation of Ag Water Supplies

To assist agricultural water users in quantifying water use, conserving existing water use through irrigation audits, and reducing dependence on ground water and surface water supplies through agricultural water catchments.

Water Resources and Land Use Planning

To conduct research activities and analyses in an effort to further the understanding of water use and to develop basin plans that improve its management and efficiency.

Conservation District Education and Outreach

To provide natural resource information and education to assist Georgia's citizens in protection of Georgia's soil and water resources.

Watershed Flood Control Dams

To provide for the proper operation and maintenance of the District's 357 USDA-constructed flood control watershed structures in Georgia and bring Category I watershed structures into compliance with Georgia's Safe Dams Act.

Additional Links:

[Georgia Department of Agriculture](#)

[Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance](#)

[USDA: Conservationists and Landowners](#)

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Agribusiness Resource Center

The USDA maintains an informative and detailed web site that provides information to Agribusinesses in Southwest Georgia.

[Economic Research Service](#)

Provides key indicators, outlook analysis, and a wealth of data on the U.S. food and agricultural system.

[USDA Quality Standards](#)

USDA quality standards are based on measurable attributes that describe the value and utility of the product. You can download copies of the Food Quality Standards by Commodity at the USDA's Grading, Certification and Verification page.

[Exporting Regulations and Policies](#)

The USDA monitors the export of products from the United States through a standard set of regulations and policies. This page contains policy and regulations details as well as a helpful checklist for setting up an Agribusiness.

[Food Safety](#)

This site provides information on food handling, recalls, and irradiation as well as foodborne illnesses and food safety resources.

[Marketing Assistance Programs](#)

Assist farmers, agribusinesses, and state agriculture departments by increasing commodity production through financial assistance, research and promotion, and market stabilization.

[Pricing Support](#)

Here you will find daily market prices and interest rates for farmers and ranchers applying for financial assistance.

Quality Assurance

USDA has set federal and state recognized quality standards and policies for U.S. food and grain products.

Safety Inspections

The USDA inspects and monitors all meat, poultry and egg products sold in interstate and foreign commerce to ensure compliance with mandatory U.S. food safety standards and inspection legislation.

Trade Policy and Procedures

Designed to develop and expand commercial outlets for U.S. commodities and agricultural products, provide international food assistance, and offer U.S. consumers with access to a wider variety of foods at reasonable prices, including those not produced domestically.

Additional Links:

[Georgia Department of Agriculture](#)

[USDA \(Agribusiness\)](#)

[Georgia Agribusiness Council](#)

[Georgia Agricultural Statistics Service](#)

[Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development](#)

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Rural Development Resource Center

The USDA's Office of Rural Development offers several programs to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for all rural Americans. Rural Development programs are delivered through the following channels:

Utilities Programs

Address rural America's need for basic services such as clean running water, sewers and waste disposal, electricity, and telecommunications.

Housing Programs

Address rural America's need for single-family and multi-family housing as well as health facilities, fire and police stations, and other community facilities.

Business Programs

Provide help to rural areas that need to develop new job opportunities, allowing businesses and cooperatives to remain viable in a changing economy.

Community Development Programs

Operate special initiatives to demonstrate effective community development techniques and address unique and pressing economic development issues.

For state of Georgia-specific information, please visit the USDA's [**Rural Development Georgia**](#) page.

Additional Links:

[Georgia Rural Development Council](#)

[Southwest Georgia Cooperative Development Center](#)

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Hunting and Fishing Resource Center

Southwest Georgia boasts a rich hunting and fishing tradition. Below are several resources to help outdoorsmen and women obtain the proper licenses, understand the state's guidelines and regulations, and find a place to hunt or fish.

The [**Georgia Department of Natural Resources**](#) (DNR) is comprised of six divisions that work together to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic and cultural resources.

On the Georgia DNR's web site, you can find step-by-step instructions for how to obtain a [**Geo**](#)

[Georgia Hunting License](#)

or

[Georgia Fishing License](#)

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On the [Hunting Page](#), find everything you need to know about hunting in Georgia, including available hunter education opportunities, Georgia's hunting regulations, seasons and bag limits, apply for quota hunts, learn more about specific hunting opportunities on our WMAs, download WMA maps, learn about wildlife habitat management, and more.

The [Fishing Page](#) provides similar information including current sport fishing regulations, help locating a boat ramp or a nearby Public Fishing Area, find a seasonal or year-round trout stream, discover Georgia's abundant reservoir and river fishing opportunities, learn more about the Go Fish Georgia Initiative, and more.

Additional Links:

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Georgia Offices](#)

[Georgia Department of Natural Resources - Wildlife Resources Division](#)

[National Park Service](#)

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